

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL OPTICAL COMMITTEE AGM

Monday 21st March 2016

Room 6, Biopark, Welwyn Garden City

MINUTES

Present:

Wendy D'E Vallancey (Chair)

Daniel Harris

James Radley

Parget Thethy

Dipa Michalik

Eileen Gay

Jane Bunker

Mary Bramley

Barbie Wheatcroft

Richard Stokes

Christine Messiter

Sally Cottle

Peter Chapman

Gill Abbott

Shane Abbas Bhimani

Dhiren Nakrani

Minute Secretary: Sally Page

Chris Newell from LOCSU was welcomed to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sarah Stevenson, Heather Parker, Kajal Shah and Sally Tucker.

2. Election of Chair

Wendy was elected to chair the meeting.

3. Minutes from 2015 AGM

Minutes from the meeting on 30th March 2015 were unanimously approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report

6. Loan to LOC Company and Memorandum of Understanding

A loan of approximately £5000 is needed from the LOC to the LOC Company. This was unanimously agreed by all present. Chris said that it was important to ensure that the Directors do not do more than required and suggested that at least two directors agree between them approximately how long each particular task will take (LOCSU can give advice on this). Barbie said that it is easy once you understand the language and that she does not feel she can charge for 'muddle time'. Daniel asked whether LOCSU can provide guidance on how to complete the necessary tasks. Chris said it should be 3-4 days to get all the initial set-up paperwork completed. Eileen requested that LOCSU produce guidance on what banks will need in order to open a Company account, as it was a nightmare for her and this could help others. Chris said yes, however, they change all the time and different banks want different things. He added that, when the bank request what they want, you could ask LOCSU for advice at that stage.

7. Rates for hours worked by individuals on the LOC Company.

It was agreed that the existing LOC rates would remain appropriate to pay LOC Company Directors for their time. Chris agreed that these were fairly standard. The rates are:

- Daily rate (out of practice) £300
- Half day rate (out of practice) £150
- Hourly rate (out of practice) £40
- Hourly evening rate £25

Eileen requested clarification as to whether the Directors are paid from the LOC or LOC Company accounts? It seems that the set-up costs are much more significant than the actual running costs. It was felt that the set up costs should come from the LOC loan amount, rather than directly from the LOC. When members of the committee/Company are at meetings trying to commission services and so on, it would be paid through the LOC but direct work for the Company would be paid from the Company account. The Company is non-profit so any extra money (if made) would go back in to the services being provided. Company Directors would decide what happens to this money in conjunction with the LOC.

8. LOCSU Levy – Presentation by Chris Newell

- LOCSU wants more money.

- Why? Because the NHS has no money and they are keen to spend money on preventative community services rather than acute services. LOCSU and LOCs are about the Optical Sector. Our traditional role of eye care is changing, for example, auto refraction is now very good and there is even an auto refraction app! The GOS budget is unlikely to change. Commissioned services are typically running below the predicted activity levels. Ophthalmologists are keen to keep services in hospital or take themselves in to the community and multiples are seeing the value of enhanced services.

- LOCSU has come up with a 'Breakthrough Strategy', which is available online. The goal is to:

- double MECs services in the next year
- Become more involved in step down care (it is estimated that 1.5 million outpatient appointments, which amounts to approximately £75 million could come to us)
- It is LOCSUs duty to make these things happen and it is estimated that they need approximately £200,000 to do it.

- They are requesting increasing the levy from 0.4% to 0.5%. Chris added that the levy was originally at 0.5% but was reduced. This increase would enable LOCSU to help increase the number of services and service activity. He added that 94% of direct services are less effective than those run via LOC Companies.

Chris then opened the floor to questions and comments:

1. Eileen asked why current services are under-utilised. Chris explained that it is mainly the direct services (those not run through an LOC Company). The main reason for underperformance is a lack of engagement from contractors and possibly contractors not claiming, that is not putting time in to Webstar. He added that the engagement with MEC services is better.
2. Dipa said that, when the medics went on strike, it was 98% of them. She said that the Optic profession is not united and that we need increased collaboration, not division. It was proposed that LOCSU could approach Specsavers and ask them to stop free eye tests. They have been asked before and have said no, as it is a business decision. Chris added that the majority of Specsavers Directors, who are Optoms, do not agree with free eye tests.

3. We need to use GPs to get services up and running, as they will be the referrers. If the services are commissioned and there are proper pathways, GPs and CCGs will like it, as it will make their lives easier. We need help from LOCSU to communicate with our CCGs. It was suggested that the best way to get GPs on side is by inviting them out or inviting them in to practice.

If we increase the LOCSU levy, we should make sure that we are using LOCSU and also ensure that their lectures and training are up to standard. Daniel – our CCG flatly refuse to pay Optoms for anything so we need LOCSUs help. Chris – we need to prove that it is value for money and show what other CCGs are saving. Our CCGs know nothing about optics. LOCSU should help us to get in to the CCG. It was also added that, when the GOS contract is changed, LOCSU need to fight for us better than they did with the DVLA situation. Chris also confirmed that the levy covers any number of visits from LOCSU to meetings and any number of hours. There are never any additional costs.

It was unanimously agreed that we would increase the LOCSU levy as requested.

Eileen therefore proposed raising the levy to 0.7% (0.5% for LOCSU and 0.2% for LOC). It is currently 0.6% in total. She noted that it took a long time for the changes to take place last time a change was made.

9. Accounts

The LOC budget for 2016 has not been done, as there are too many unknowns with the start-up of the LOC Company, along with the changes taking place at the PSU.

10. Electing auditors

It was agreed that the current auditors would be re-appointed.

11. Any other business

- a. During the discussions about LOCSU, it was suggested that the LOC hold a MECS GP CET evening.
- b. How do we attract young Optoms to the committee? An LOC update will be given at the next CET event. Could we do a pre-reg event? We will also add a request on the next newsletter for a pre-reg to join the committee.
- c. Can LOCSU help us to create a business plan? ACTION – Daniel to email Rupesh to arrange. Chris advised that it would be good to have Catriona in attendance as well.

The meeting terminated at 9.15pm.